

February 13, 2023

Members of the Senate Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Connecticut State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: HB 6628 - Support

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (AIArthritis), I encourage you to vote yes on HB 6628 when it is before you.

We are leaders in advancing education, advocacy, and research for those impacted by autoimmune and autoinflammatory arthritis (AIArthritis) diseases through peer-led guidance, collaboration, and resources that are driven by patient-identified issues and patient-infused solutions. As we are led by patients, we understand the importance of early, appropriate treatment.

House Bill 6628 will require Medicaid coverage of biomarker testing for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, appropriate management, or ongoing monitoring of an enrollee's disease when indicated by medical evidence. **Biomarker testing connects patients with the most effective treatments.**

Precision medicine uses biomarker testing to gather information about a person's own body to prevent, diagnose, or treat disease. The information gleaned from biomarker testing can help determine the treatment that will work the best for the specific patient, and can also allow patients to avoid treatments that are unlikely to be effective. **While biomarker testing originated in cancer care, it is rapidly increasing in usage for other conditions such as autoimmune disease.**

Using the traditional method of trial and error, identifying an effective treatment for a particular patient can take months – even years. In chronic, degenerative diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis, for example, any length of time spent trying (and failing) ineffective treatments allows for the disease to progress, causing potentially irreversible damage to joints, tissues, and organs. Matter-of-fact, 70% of patients with any AIArthritis Disease will develop comorbidities due to uncontrolled inflammation. **. This not only causes pain and suffering for the patient, but increases health care consumption and costs for both the person affected and the health system as a whole.**

We urge you to help ensure patients have access to early, appropriate treatment with your support of HB 6628.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Viscarra  
Public Policy Manager  
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis